Yancy Street Gazette

MARVEL COMICS GROUP

THE MARVEL AGE OF COMICS "NUFF SAID!" 25¢

GANG MAKES P.R.C. A SUCCESS

The Yancy Street Gang Public Relations Committee, founded by Tony Isabella, enthused by such as Pat Janson, Ann Henry, and Corbett Besco and gaffed at by lesser fanzines, has caught fire and become the biggest success since the Red Sox found Yaz. And if that sentence makes any sense to you, you're just about wild enough to hop on the band wagon!

Actually, it really caught the editors by surprise when Tony Isabella's idea for welcoming new Gang members became such an overnight hit. In his column a few month's back, Tony suggested a committee of Yancy Streeters to write new members and welcome them. The idea quickly exploded with enthusiasm,and members from all over the country wrote in to offer their services. Ann Henry began modification plans with with some great suggestions, including that the PRC branch into publicity management. Another of her ideas, specially designed offset stationery for the Committee, is even now being cooked up.

We certainly don't want this to sound like an ad; it is, more than anything, an expression of thanks and congratulations. Besides, it seems that throughout the history of the YSG, spirit is something that never needed to be drummed up. Still, if anyone is interested in volunteering to write new Gang members, write Tony or Pat. 11203 Peony Ave. Cleveland, Ohio 44111. 1206 Pontiac Ave. Cranston, R.I. 02920

—CLUB NEWS—

LEE RUMOR: FALSE!!

Early in April the YSG editors got wind of a fantastic "scoop" which consisted mostly of Stan Lee being charged with embezzlement and Jack Kiroy, Don Heck, and John Romita indignantly quitting Marvel's ranks. With their usual alertness and presence of mind, the editors smelled a story. Using more profound logic, they managed to telephone 625 Madison at just about five minutes after quitting, making contact with a scholarly old custodian. Undaunted they checked all around fandom for the news.

Some evidence fanned the fires. Art critics had recently noted a drop in Kirby's Thor work. When Stan Lee was asked about this, he allegedly bellowed forth with a very suspicious "no comment". The hunt was kindled with new vigor.

Then the rumors were ended with a letter from Gary Friedrich saying that it was all quite preposterous, and the Bullpen would appreciate the YSG's help in dispelling the ridiculous lie.

Ah, well, the scandal business is a risky one at best.

GAZETTE PRINTED IN D.C.

The Gazette printing office is now in Washington D.C., only a death defying leap from the suburbs where Jan, John, and Steve live.

What's so earth-shaking about this, you ask? Well, the last few months the YSG has been printed in Warren, Michigan, making it necessary to mail everything to our correspondent there, Dan Madaj. In addition to the postage costs, the Gazette was generally finished up to three weeks before it got out to the members. Now, with the D.C. printing job taking only two days, the YSG should be on schedule.

YSG CHANGES ADDRESS

The Gang has outlived two of its editors. Jan Bertholf and John Hoecker, both seniors in high school this year, will be off to College next September. Jan to Texas A & M and John to Virginia Polytech. Steve Zeigler, the youngest editor, will inherit the bulk of the editorial chores. Wanting to begin early to avoid a sudden switch-over that could cause the YSG bubble to burst, the change is starting this issue, with the main address converting to Steve's house, 8801 Trafalgar Ct. Springfield, Va.

And so, while the summer is still ahead, the ease-over is started. From here on send all monetary, article, and artistic contributions (that's dues, y'know) to Steve.

We editors are very proud of this 18th issue of the Gazette. Greg Kishel, the Gadfly, has come through again with another outstanding four-page work entitled "On The Relevancy in the Comic Book." We're especially proud of a new series by Pat Janson, "The Complete History of the Comic". Roy Thomas has written an article in opposition to Mark Evanier and his ideas. Two of fandom's finest artists, Al Grinage and Dave Cockrum continue this issue with fantastic illos we think you'll like. This issue, we were forced to be selective, leaving out a good amount of deserving material, but if the dues come in abundantly, we can add more pages.

On the Relevancy in the Comic Book

by Greg Kishel

From about 1950 to 1955, the comic company with the highest quality and the highest sales was the EC comics group. The themes of the EC comics ranged from science fiction to horror to brutal, bloody war, with every possible variant in between. At that time, there was no Comics Code Authority--the comics publishers were virtually unlimited in their choice of the subject matter and content of their publications. The EC group, being as unbounded as anybody else, published hundreds of tales of murder, sadism, gore, perverted psychology, unlimited warfare, and horror. However, no matter how bloody or perverted the tales seemed on the surface, underneath lurked a flickering genius--a genius strangely twisted by the attitudes of the times, but a strong genius nonetheless.

The EC science fiction stories were, of course, unreal and almost always not set in the here-and-now world. The EC horror stories, though very often set in the contemporary world, were, of course, naught but gruesome fantasies. However, there tales quite often carried an ominous import--they were quite often, underneath all the gore and all the super-science, ironic and sometimes chilling commentaries on our life in the here-and-now. The story "Judgment Day" (reprinted in the Ballantine paperback Tales of the Incredible), for example, was on the surface a tale of the far future, in which a robot planet inquires for membership in the Galactic Federation and an Earth envoy is sent to inspect their world. As the story progresses, one gets flashes of the message underneath the "top level" plot of the orange robots and the outcast blue robots. Then, at the poetically beautiful and morally uplifting final panel, one gets a flash of the import of the tale--and suddenly bigoty and racial strife seem outmoded, things that Man must leave behind in his conquest of the universe.

At the opposite pole from the horror and sci-fi comics were the chock-type comics like Shock SuspenStories and Crime SuspenStories. More often than not, these carried tales of outré psychological processes and bizarre crimes only bordering on the credible--however, occasionally they carried stories even more ominous than those in the fantasy comics. For instance, there was the account of "The Patriots," in Shock SuspenStories #2. This tale gave the short account of a group of super-patriotic muscle-men who, during a "Hey, hey, whaddaya say, let's all cheer for the USA" parade, beat to death a blind man who neglects to remove his hat when the U.S. flag is carried by him. At the time it was published (1952), the story was merely a disturbing fantasy. Now, with the rise of the John Birch Society, the "conscientious dissenters," the draft dodgers, and all the rest, the story is almost terrifying in what it implicates.

Do not get the idea that all of the stories the EC group published were of this nature--though there was a large percentage of these "stories with insight," the majority of their stories were meant for idle reading--whether by horrification or by imbuing a sense of wonder, the bulk of the stories were written for entertainment. However, a great many of their tales carried the before-mentioned flicker of genius --which must certainly make them classics in the graphic story field.

In 1955, when faced with Dr. Frederick Wertham's ominous threat of total censorship and the newly-formed Comics Code Authority's power to keep their comics off the newsstands, EC launched its "New Direction" magazines--among which were MD,

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Impact, Aces High, and Psychoanalysis. These promised "a totally new and different reading experience" by their cover blurbs--and they certainly gave it. Virtually all of the stories published in these magazines had pschological implications--and most of them were set in the here-and-now of the middle 1950's, with ordinary people as the heroes or, occasionally, anti-heroes. There was no more gruesome, brutal horror, no more twisted psychology, very few anti-heroes --these tales dealt with the effects of divorce, of the loss of love between parents and their children, of runaway kids; in short, these stories showed life as it was. There were no more brutal, shocking denouements--the Comics Code took care of those. However, in their place was a more subdued tone--but a tone extremely effective nonetheless.

The "New Direction" magazines were the last struggle of EC; within six months of the coming of the "New Direction," EC ignominiously died. The company still survives, but only as the publisher of Mad Magazine. Other comics groups survived by printing sci-fi, Westerns, and crimestories--many, many of which were pure hack work. The question that slowly rises here is, "How can trash survive--and all that is of value in the comic book die without ever being discovered by an audience that can appreciate it?"

The period after the death of EC was probably the lowest the comic book ever went, both in quality and in popularity. It seemed that the message, the import, and all the sincerity had gone with all the gore and horror and sadism.

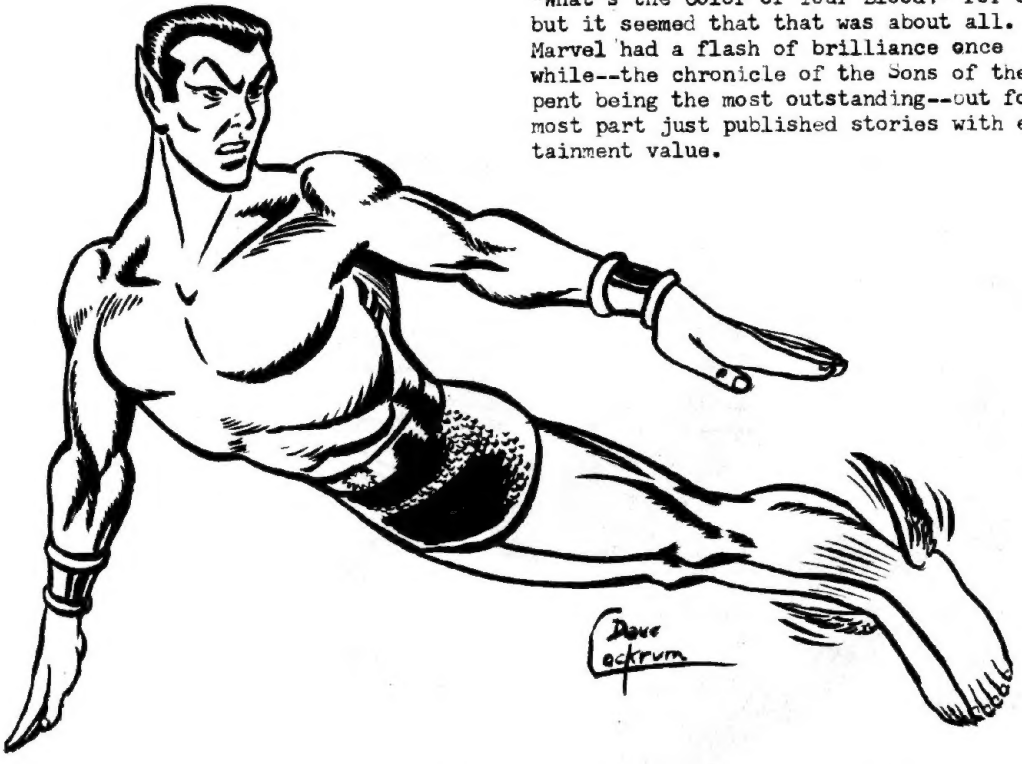
Around 1960, the comic book experienced a renaissance. DC revived their old heroes of the Golden Age with new identities and constumes, as well as a new vigor. Marvel created the Fantastic Four and later replaced its tired surprise-ending fantasies with heroes. Comics seemed to be evolving upwards once more. The Julius Schwartz-edited Strange Adventures featured many well-wrought sci-fi stories with meaning, like "Earth--the Forbidden Planet" and "The Jigsaw Weapon World." The "Atomic Knights" stories in Strange Adventures made up one of the finest series ever published; they created an utterly realistic picture of the post-atomic-war world and the dog-eat-dog, scrabble-for-life society that arose in that nightmare world. The Fantastic Four met the Hate-Monger and his ultimate weapon of bigotry and hate. The Hulk, an experiment in the classic anti-hero, symbolized the ultimate in the victim of bigotry. Comics seemed to be reviving themselves into sometning of meaning once again.

Then, when it seemed that a breakthrough must come, the wave started to collapse. Julius Schwartz and his team of artists and writers were taken from Strange Adventures and Mystery in Space and were transfered to the Batman comics, where they did many good detective stories but very seldom put out anything with a message. CONTINUED.

Stan Lee saw he had a good thing and began his hip-talkin', swingin', utterly trite editorial policy and thus wrecked Spider-Man, stretched out good Hulk stories into interminable serials, turned Daredevil from a tragic figure into a split-personality swinger, and took much of the significance from Dr. Strange and several other strips. Only Captain America and occasionally, the F4, retained and communicated a protest against the injustices of society.

drawn during the 1940's and 1950's). Tower alone, out of all the new companies, gave us a few stories with meaning--but only a very few out of a great number of conventional adventure tales. It seemed that all of the new companies gave us good reading for fun and entertainment, but utterly nothing that would sock you between the eyes with its brutal truths or cause an uneasy twitch at the back of your mind with a vaguely-hinted reality.

DC then managed to come through with a couple of war stories that had a message--"What's the Color of Your Blood?" for example--but it seemed that that was about all. Marvel had a flash of brilliance once in a while--the chronicle of the Sons of the Serpent being the most outstanding--but for the most part just published stories with entertainment value.

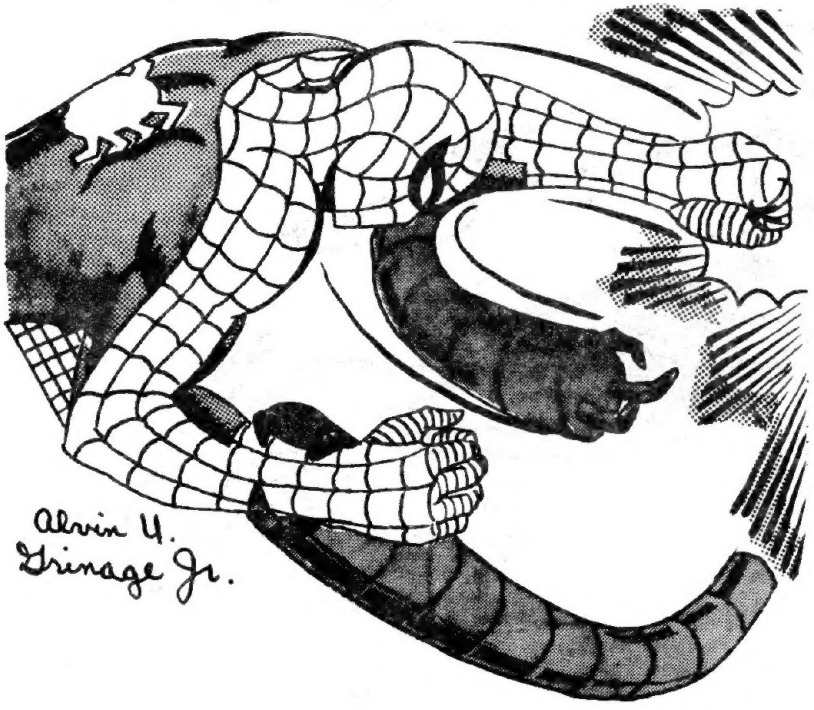


The collapse of meaning reflected in the new companies that were rising during the '65-'67 period. King Comics gave us a fantastically-well-done Flash Gordon series which was, unfortunately, no more than enjoyable superscience hooyah. Charlton gave us many original heroes and stories, but most of them were just well-written, well-drawn adventure tales. Milson's Fatman gave us fun-fantasy-satire but furnished no food for thought. Harvey reprinted much excellent material and gave us some fun-filled new stuff, but only the Spirit reprint issues were of value (and the Spirit stories had been written and

One of the undercurrent causes of "comics fandom" is to make the American public realize that comics are not "junk fit only for the minds of eight-year-olds and useless dreamers." It should theoretically be the goal of every comics editor to have his publications appraised for their intrinsic value and not shunned just because they are comic books. However, with the theme of comic books at the level it has now, it seems unlikely that they will be appraised with no biases. At present, we, the comic readers, are given many good adventure stories with good entertainment value, but we are given very little that has anything CONTINUED

worthwhile to say! Yes, the main purpose of the comic is to entertain--but if a message of psychological significance, or a biting satire on American society, can be introduced into the story line to carry it along, the comic becomes something worthwhile, something that a serious critic can read and at least have something tangible to criticize.

I am not blaming the Comics Code Authority for the present state of affairs--they are doing the job the were founded to do, that of keeping the kid's minds "uncorrupted," at least from the standpoint of their experience with comics. Rather, it is the editors and publishers who are to blame--they are content enough to stay with the formula they now have and the ruts that they are in, Lee putting out his interminable-stretched continued stories and the DC editors supplying their readers with hero-battles-villain plots. It is they on whom the responsibility of creating something with a deeper meaning, something that can influence the minds of the younger readers, is resting--and if they wish to create a suitable landmark for themselves, they could transform the comic book, ever so slowly, from the lowly position it holds now to a rank equal to that of any of the other mass-audience media, and have it considered as ranking with such.



Recently it seems that both DC and Marvel are experimenting once more with the "message" story. DC's Deadman, for example, is a regular EC-type anti-hero, with his existence totally based on revenge, and I am quite surprised that such a story every got past the CCA--such a concept can profoundly influence the younger readers who could take Deadman as a hero and not the tragically warped anti-hero he really is. Marvel's Sgt. Fury has, under Gary Friedrich's writing, presented a couple of good psychologically-based, hard-hitting tales--"The War Lover" and "The Assassin" (which must certainly be the finest Sgt. Fury tale ever produced) among them.

From these efforts--which number very few at present, but one must not forget that from these could stem a whole "New New Direction"--it seems that the "comic story with insight" is not totally dead and was only slumbering for a period. These stories have been purely experimentalist so far, but it seems that Deadman has gotten a hearty welcome in fandom, and it appears that the Friedrich-written Sgt. Fury stories are getting more response than the earlier tales. Stories of this nature could bring about a whole new conception of the graphic story--a conception that would give meaning as well as entertainment--and it could ultimately bring the comic to the attention of critics as a heretofore-neglected medium. The decision on this weighty matter is up to the editors of the comics themselves, and it is their decision alone. We can only hope that they will decide to their favor as well as to ours.

Greg Kishel
The Gadfly of Marveldom/ Editor, Marvel Mirror/ 311-8½ Street South/ Virginia, Minn. 55792

Villains and the Negro

by Ann Henry

Have you ever stopped to think about the importance of the villain in comic books? It seems to me that the villain is 50% of the story. Depending on his particular style, he almost makes the story.

I find that the villains fit a few basic patterns. (1) There is the thief. (2) Next there is the mad villain. He's power mad, revenge mad, or just plain mad. (3) Then there's the mistaken or misguided villain. (4) The fourth is the non-villain villain. This is the character that is not evil, but by nature or mistakenly opposes the good-guy.

You can usually classify a villain into one of these categories. Sometimes there is a transition between one or two of them. Of course, there are exceptions. I also realize that this is no new discovery for those who read comics. I've outlined this for this reason.

Recently there has been a lot of talk about Negroes in comics, particularly in the role of villains. I agree there could be more dark faces in street scenes and other places in comic book stories, but a Negro villain is another matter.

I think I am one of the few people, or so it seems, who believes that the Marvel Bullpen is not 100% mercenary. Even so a drop on the sales chart doesn't please anyone but Honest Irving F. The Bullpen has said that it believes all Marvelites are fair-minded and anti-most bad things in human relations. I too, would like to believe this. Yet, I can't help seeing a big brown question mark floating around the hallowed halls of Marveldom.

What kind of villain would he be? A thief? Why would he steal; because he enjoys it? Or because he's mad? He could be a combination of (1) and (2). He is a thief seeking revenge on society because of whatever reason the writer uses. It would be easy for those who wanted to consider the thief a stereotyped Negro. How about a nuclear physicist gone mad. There are too few Negro scientists. To portray one gone mad, even by accident is bound to excite excitable people. He could be a (3). A tried and true villain could use a Negro. Again there would be a stereotyping and a lot of other things.

There are a couple of ways of going around the problem. One would be to make him a (4), the other would be to use the approach in creating the Black Panther. He could be something other than an American or even anti-American. This way they could avoid America's race problems or at least skirt around them. It's not bad, but it's not very good either.

Try this one. A Negro who lives in a slum is bitten by a radioactive rat. He becomes superpowered. He then decides to kidnap and torture all the Congressmen who voted against the rat extermination bill. You don't think so; I don't either.

Who would fight this Negro villain? A Norse god? Would he be ganged up on by a group of super heroes? How about a spiderman who is getting a higher education and owns his own motorcycle? Then there are a couple of other ways; Black Panther

a soul brother. Daredevil; Would Daredevil's extraordinary senses tell him he was fighting a Negro? Even if the villain's voice had lost it's Negro inflections?

How about a story--the Wasp has been kidnapped. There is a full page panel with 'Ratman' in his slum hideaway chaining the delicate Wasp to a brick wall. Or how would you feel if Spider-man suffered defeat at the hands of a Negro? Or still further, how would you feel seeing a Negro villain clobbered by Ben Grimm or some other super-hero? It's a comic book you say. It doesn't matter one way or the other, but it does affect us even if it does not seem to.

Even a 12¢ comic book can affect our thinking. I do believe that Marvel is the comic company that thinking people prefer. As a Negro Marvelite I like to believe that we (Marvel fandom) are above stereotyping.

The idea is to avoid over identification and stereotyping. But, even the indefatigable Marvel Bullpen cannot do this. It's entirely up to each and every individual reader. We must accept the story as the story of a person on the wrong side of the law, for whatever reason, who just happens to be Negro.

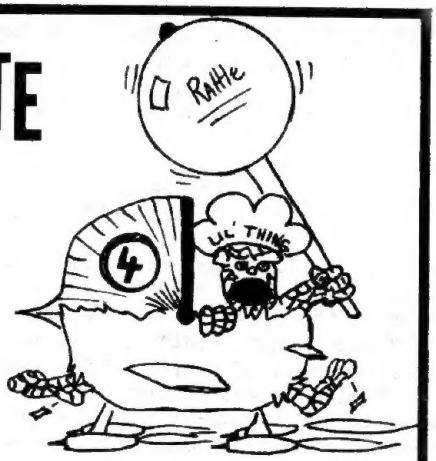
The story will come, eventually. So why not continue a great Marvel tradition. Let us be the FIRST group to eliminate racial stereotyping and unwarranted prejudice. How do you feel?

Ann Henry/ 3115 Gravier St./N.O. La,70119

As most Yancy Streeters know, we had a depression back in November of 1967 and we were having financial difficulties. Well, when we sent out our plea for everyone to pay their dues Danny Eaton came through with a contribution of ¼ page worth of ad space for any ad we wanted to place in the Gazette. So here now is Danny's ad...

Yancy Street Gazette
Devoted Primarily To Marvel Comics Group
ALL PHOTO OFFSET — NEWS LETTER FORMAT
25¢ MEMBER 35¢ NON-MEMBER 25¢ MEMBERSHIP
8801 Trafalgar Ct., Springfield, Va. 22151

THE COMPLETE HISTORY OF THE COMIC



By Pat Janson

As we all know, comics consist of a series of pictured representations telling a story, developing a situation, or presenting a character in various circumtances. Comics, then, may consist of single representations (Capt. America & Superman in the comic book), like the "Blondie" comic strip. The sequence of pictures is usually supplemented by word balloons holding dialogue or captions. But it is the "picture story", the sequence that intelligently narrates the story itself. Occasional comic strips have contained neither balloons,nor captions (like "Henry"). In the form of picture sequences, comics have widened their popularity to the extent that they've come to be a consistant feature of of almost all newspapers, magazines, and books, and even a part of the promoting business. Actually, comics have obtained such unbelievable popularity as to have merited considerable study as a social phenomenom. First, comics were drawn largely around plots that exploited humerous, laughable, and the ridiculous. Hence, this name, "comics". Such are the "Katzenjammer Kids", or at times, "Blondie". Most comics today, though, is not humorous comedy, but based on the telling of an adventure story, such as "Terry and the Pirates" and are known as such both to the public and publishers, and seem to remain so.

In 1942, the American Institute of Graphic Arts published an account of the comic entitled, "Comic Strip--It's history and significance." The earliest example of comic strip lineage in the exhibition was a drawing copied from a rock shelter in Cogul, Spain, depicting a buffalo hunt, a drawing thought to have originated in the Paleolithic Age, which in Western Europe ended about 2,500 B.C. Also "comical" stories have been found in Egyptian tombs! Narrative art through the centuries improved techniques, and a larger range of communication was used to record facts, thoughts, and human feelings; also as religious rituals, historical events, and myths. During the Middle Ages, some artists appeared, who were able to convey an idea quickly, and tell a story in rough, sketchy drawings. Some cartoonists of the 18th & 19th centuries were skilled in the use of sequence panels and even word balloons.

The basic features of a comic strip were so fully developed during the 19th century, that European and American periodicals found it necessary to adapt them to the newspaper printing requirements. In 1894, R. F. Outcault (1863-1928) began a series in the New York World about the antics of a clown and dog at a picnic,and newspaper comic strips began to grow in popularity, enjoying a tremendous vogue between 1910 and 1930. Outcault later became known for his "Yellow Kid" and "Buster Brown" comic strips. It is noted that these comics definitely improved on primitive picture writing by adding descriptive dialogues and captions. Moreover, in the early '30's, a basic change in the subject matter became apparent, and some of the funnies were replaced by adventure stories, exemplified by "Little Orphan Annie," "Dick Tracy," and "Terry and the Pirates".

It now seems that next to the front page, our beloved "educational section" sells the paper. The American Newspaper Association conducted a study and soon revealed that among readers, the comic sections were read by 83%

of the men, and 79% of the women; while the New York Times seemed to be the only major newspaper without a comic strip. Two-thirds of the children read the daily strips, and over 40 million people devour the Sunday Comics.

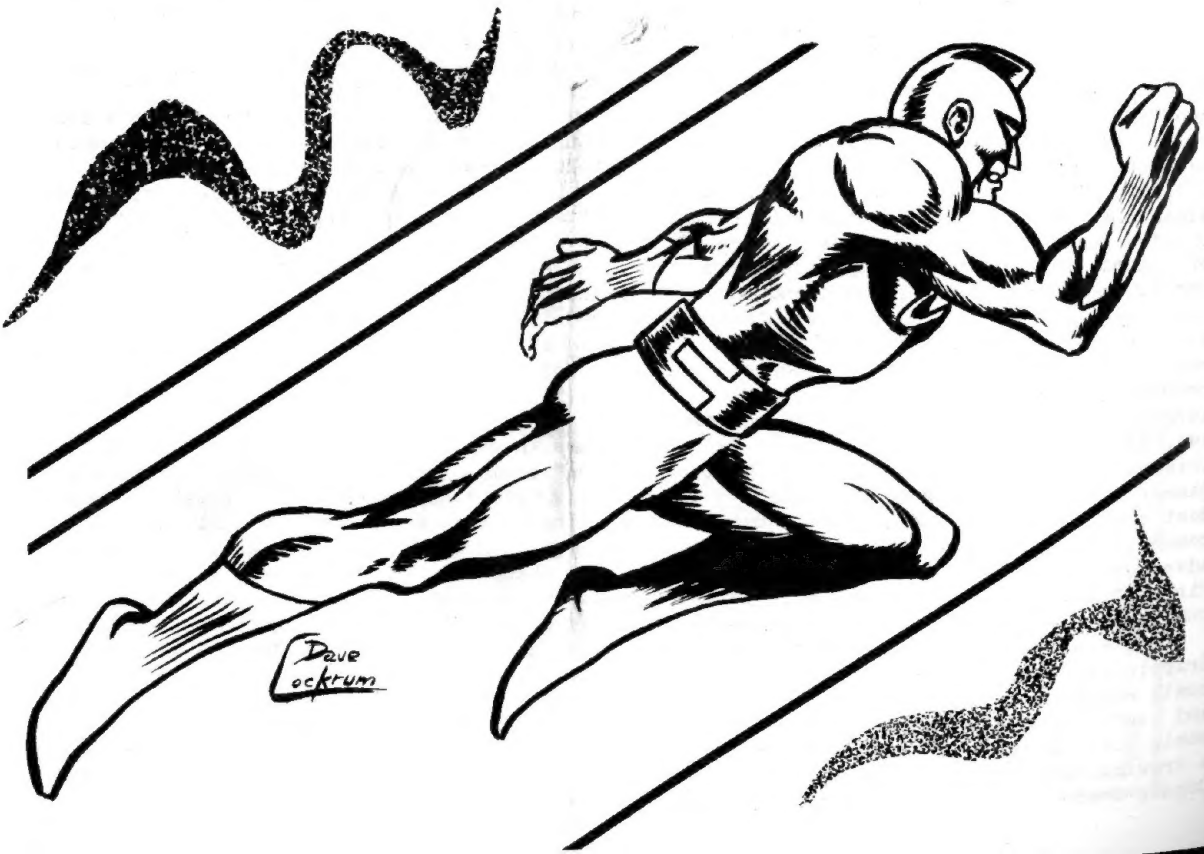
Quite a few intellects show interest in strips such as "Krazy Kat", etc., but even though they also adhere to the more dramatic . Famed American novelist, John Stienbeck, enjoyed "Terry and the Pirates". Picasso, the great Spanish painter, enjoys the "Katzenjammer Kids", and J. Edgar Hoover enjoys, of course, "Dick Tracy".

Comics became so popular, that peop began to act strangely to different occu ances in the strips and books. How many remember, or've heard of the way Milton Caniff portrayed the death of Ravan Sherman in "Terry and the Pirates"? About 1,400 letters of sympathy poured in, quite a few accompanied floral offerings. One Pennsylvania newspaper gave the item as a death notice. On the day Ravan was "buried", 450 students of Loyola University (of Chicago) paid tribute by gathering on campus and facing east for a minute of reverence. When Smiling Jack was lost at sea, Pan American Airlines was urged by disturbed fans to send out a rescue plane! When Annie Rooney was pictured without gifts on Christmas, the newspapers were flooded with toys. When Blondie was expecting Cookie (years ago), 400,000 letters poured in with name suggestions. Several comics became so well-known that the most popular characters were carried in narrative stories over the American and Columbian Broadcasting Company radio stations, and in some parts of the country, they still are! In Crystal City, Texas (heart of the spinach country), the people raised a monument to Popeye!

Comics then invaded the campus and classroom as "Sadie Hawkins Day" is celebrated at more than 500 schools and colleges. More than 2,000 classes are teaching children to read by the use of Superman word books! There are many other comical (and serious) comic notabilities, but are not really necessary.

Continued Next Month--the beginning of the comic magazine itself.

Pat Janson/1206 Pontiac Ave./Cranston, R.I.



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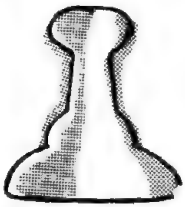

Pawns of Doctor Doom

by Andris Taskans

By now all of you have read Strange Tales #167 which came out not too long ago. The big point of this issue to many fans was the conclusion (more or less) of the Yellow Claw episode in SHIELD. Many, myself included, were shocked to learn that the Yellow Claw was an android controlled by Dr. Doom. However, my shock was not of admiration but disappointment. Certainly the art was good and, to the casual eye, so was the story. Yet it was this above ending that was the issue's fault. Why? It is a matter of logic and credibility--the elements that can make or break a story.

Let us first assume that Marvel is aiming for realism (of sorts) in its stories. (In other words, that it is not just willing to hack out any unplanned trash, even it is good trash.) . All right!

For a member to like a story, he must first be able to accept it. To be accepted, a story must be logical, no matter how fantastic the plot otherwise is. This then is my complaint: the ending of "Armageddon" was illogical.

Let's go back to the beginning. We (the readers) are told that the Yellow Claw was behind a mass invasion of New York by an army of zombies who tried to conquer the metropolis by using an id-paralyzer. The attack was stopped by Nick Fury and Captain America with the Fantastic Four's help. We are told that the device used to halt the zombies also caused the Great Blackout. In a series of episodes we are shown the Claw's bids for power and revenge. During these issues we are given many interesting details--details which support my claim and damn the ending.

One of the first is the statement made by Jimmy Woo, FBI man and friend of Cap: "Back a few years ago, I fought one of the most sinister evil masterminds who ever lived! Then suddenly he dropped out of sight! We thought he was dead! (Page 2, panel 6, ST#160, referring to Claw). This tells us that the Yellow Claw is no fly-by-nighter, but a solidly entrenched villian. (Though the Claw may be a new creation, I believe otherwise. I seem to remember that there was a Yellow Claw in the fifties, thus proving that he is the resurrection of an older villian. Unfortunately I can't check this. ((YC existed as an Atlas villian in the fifties, Ed.)) In the next ish of ST (pp 11and12, #161) we learn that the Claw has been planning his power play for a long time and has sworn revenge on Jimmy Woo long ago. We also see for the first time inklings of Suwan's love for the agent.

In the self-same panel, Voltzman, the Claw'a henchman, attributes Claw with the all too human trait of impatience. (Don't go away, I'm reaching for a point). The next ish, we learn the Claw's name: Fang Chu. In number 163 we are given an altogether too rare (for Marvel) insight into the villian's Oriental philosophy (see page 4) as he plots to steal the ultimate annihilator from A.I.M. This he does magnificently, even though SHIELD gives him some trouble. Nothing seems to stop this Colossus of Corruption as he sweeps all his foes before him with his hypnotic powers. An important piece of my evidence appears in #164 when the Claw reveals to Voltzman that he has lived for hundreds of years. Then in #165, we see the Yellow Claw escape SHIELD agents by using hyper-psionic brain emanations, which, unfortunately, are a drain on his nervous system. Now, closer to home plate, we see SHIELD's attack on the Claw's sky dragon. The fiend escapes, goes to his hideout, and captures Jimmy Woo, the FBI man who has been his chief and earliest opponent (#166). Suwan begs the Claw not to kill Jim, but she herself dies saving Woo. We find that he had loved her as much as she had him.

The fact is that we were shown an epic saga: a story that injected a note of stark (though melodramatic) realism into the lives of all characters and hinted at events not shown the reader. The conflict built up to the ending which was, of course, the high point of the tale. Yet it was a disillusionment! What a letdown to find that Suwan, the Claw, and everyone else in the villian entourage was only a robot...

However, it was not only a letdown, it was a blunder! If the reader hasn't grasped yet that the fact be the aforementioned proofs, I shall elucidate. We are told Dr. Doom has contrived the whole affair for his amusement, using androids in a sort of chess game. Well, this is preposterous, placing the reader in a state of disbelief. For one, there must still be a real Yellow Claw; for who has Jimmy Woo otherwise been fighting for much of his adult life, and who has his niece loved? Surely not a robot! Besides, Doom states that his game has only gone on intermittently for months, not years. Therefore, who did attack the Statue of Liberty with zombies? Surely not Doom's pawn!!

Then, too, why did Doom bother to have his synthetics--if that's what they were, impersonate the Claw and his crew? And why didn't the real Yellow Claw (surely there must be one) do anything about it? Also, do you realize that this manipulation of lives makes Doom nearly omnipotent. I say "lives" because we are shown the thoughts of the Yellow Claw (Suwan, too), and they are the thoughts of a thinking, flesh and blood man, not a robot! If he was a robot, does it mean he didn't know it? If so, then by some definitions he was not an imitation of life but a living being truly. Besides, if Doom can fool Nick Fury, all of SHIELD, and a lover himself (Woo--and don't tell me he was in love with a robot!!) what can't he do? Next thing we'll call him "God" Doom. I mean, after all that was a pretty complex and expensive game of life and death he was playing. It would have been easier to accomplish any ends he had himself. Let us hope that somewhere, somehow, we learn of the real Claw. It would be novel to have the "real" Claw battle Doom to regain his honor.

I think that Jim Steranko threw in the Dr. Doom part for the shock effect without thinking that it would demolish everything that had gone before. It's like starting a play by Shakespeare that suddenly turns into Tom Swift.

I could go on, to the dismay of many, but I won't. I will instead close with the wish that the next issue of Strange Tales will offer us a very good explanation..

Andris Taskans/456 Locksley Bay/ Winnipeg 15, Manitoba/ Canada

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ON THE CORNER OF YANCY STREET

By Tony Isabella

As this column is being written shortly after the appearance of the seventeenth issue of the Yancy Street Gazette, I haven't had time to receive your comments on the Public Relations Department. Your comments, criticisms, and suggestions are always welcome, but please, just send me your comments on the PRC, not on the rest of the Gazette.

I want to thank the following for their kind letters: Doug Fratz of Accident, Maryland; Ann Henry of New Orleans, Louisiana; Thomas Miller of Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Don Sampson, Jr. of Santa Ana, California; Jim Smith of Athens, Georgia; and Ken Viola of Hackensack, N.J.

A month or so back, someone from out of state called me long distance, but I was out at the time. My mother was unable to get this person's address, but if he would drop me a letter, I'd be glad to write back.

Corbett Besco of Ironton, Ohio (rt. 3, Box 123; Zip 45638) is trying to get a photocopy of Fantastic Four #1. Can anyone help him?

Tom Miller (483 Wilton Dr; Baton Rouge, La. 70815) would like to get the Charlton and King comics on a steady basis. Any one who can help him, write.

Ken Viola (334 Marvin Ave; Hackensack, N.J. 07601) is willing to pay for the Rip Kirby newspaper strip, supplied on a steady basis. Ken is publishing his own fanzine, Critique.

Speaking of fanzine publishers, I'd like all YSG members who are publishing their own zines to drop me a line. I plan to include a list of them in a future col.

Let's give a big hand to some YSGers who really deserve it. To Kris Bjorgen, who is responsible for the YSG's great layout. To Dan Madaj, for taking care of the printing and mailing. To John and Jane Hoecker, Kris Bjorgen, and Phil and Jan Bertholf, who type up the whole shebang! To Al Grinage, whose fine art has been appearing profusely in the past issues. To Dave Cockrum for his several great illoes last issue. And to all those who have paid up their dues, 'cuz they keep the Gang going. Special thanks are in order for Pat Janson for his work on the welcoming committee.

For those of you who want to get involved in the welcoming committee, you do not have to be an official member of the PRC to write. Anyone who can hold a pen, pencil, or a piece of charcoal and a shovel can write. But for Pete's sake, don't just sit there on your posteriors, do something!

Hey, did you catch that great heading on my column last issue (17)? Come on, editors, who designed that column head--let him get up and take a bow.//It was Kris--eds.//

Thomas R. Pomeroy of 3245 East Hillery Dr., Phoenix, Arizona 85032 is interested in Golden Age stories (photostats that is) of the MLJ characters, Hourman, Newsboy Legion, and origins of DC's super-heroes of the 1940's. He also is interested in getting the Kings.

Speaking of the King Comics, at least word from Bill Harris, Flash Gordon, Mandrake, and Phantom have been discontinued after about 12 issues each. King is still debating on whether or not they will continue publishing this summer. Jungle Jim is now running monthly and at this writing, five issues have appeared.

Well, that's it for now. Keep those postcards and letters coming. And to the person who sent that bomb, you missed. I was off at a meeting of the MAFIA (Mothers And Fathers of Italy Association, of course).

11203 Peony Ave./ Cleveland, Ohio/ 44111

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PROS RANK KIRBY# 1

BY ROY THOMAS

It was interesting to note that the group remains as controversial as it has since its conception. The X-Men mag has always been looked upon as one of Marvel's weaker comics...thought most other comic mags should only have enjoyed such sales! (Non-Marvel mags, that is!) Ye editors don't seem to like the new costumes, and I have had some reservations about 'em myself, though I helped Ross Andru and Don Heck design them. Still, the fact remains that the book has done better since they were added than it did before. Mere coincidence for several issues in a row? I'll let the clairvoyants of fandom argue the matter. Here it would seem YSG's readers are more typical, since over 2/3 of those polled dug them. So, for a chance, it is YSG's editors who are in the minority, and not me. (I've often quoted Mort Sahl's immortal line: "I've never been a member of a group large enough to be called a minority." But then again, you might be aware that, at a time when many Fans were roasting Stan and Jack's first FF effort, I wrote a favorable and foreshadowing review of it in CC.)

The one sore spot with Gary and me is, of course, Mark Evanier. I won't go so far as other pros who have read his stuff and said that he suffers from a massive inferiority complex. I prefer to think that his judgement, rather, is inferior. How else can one explain the fact that he assumes Marie Severin and Dick Ayers are great "friends" of Stan's and therefore are handed work that should logically go to someone given the Evanier seal of approval? How else to explain the same assumption about the late, great Bob Powell? True, Stan has an affection and genuine admiration for these people...and Larry Leiber is Stan's brother, of course--but he'd be the poor editor which Evanier claims if, indeed, this was the way he worked. It isn't. I'm curious...just where does Mark get his (quote) information (end unquote). He must have inherited a cracked crystal ball from Dr. Strange...or, since he's a DC fan first and always, from whoever it is that Mark Merlin changed into for a few dreadful issues.

A word about Wally Wood, whom I know personally, with whom I have sung folk songs and discussed comics, and whom I value as at least a mild friend. Wally is definitely one of the best artists in comics; on this virtually all pros that I know agree. (And, frankly, it is almost solely the opinion of pros that I would consider as evidence on the matter; Evanier's opinions interest me not at all where they reflect nothing but his own dubious credits as an art critic.) I'm not talking about the National Cartoonist Society award; they give these awards almost solely (if not solely) to their own members, and Kirby isn't one. Not do I count the Alley Awards, though I named them and helped conduct their first poll. Rather, I'm referring to the general opinion of a sizable number of Wally's fellow pros, who seem to be typical. This includes, incidently, a healthy number of non-Marvel artists.) Alright, so I've finally gotten around to my point: Wally Wood is at least one of the best artists in the field! Granted, with enthusiasm...we at Marvel would welcome him with open arms if he walked in tomorrow, don't think we wouldn't! Wally quit; he wasn't canned!

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

So then, would Mr. Evanier accept the judgement of one Wally Wood that Jack Kirby is the best superhero artist ever to set pencil to paper? Would he believe that Wally said such a thing, in public, at last year's NYCon? Would he believe that, privately, Wally told friends of mine that fan awards were meaningless as long as they didn't first honor the best of them all... Jack Kirby, king of superhero artists? Probably Mark won't; this would be contrary to the one piece of evidence he seems to accept, that of his own opinion, formed in the great city of Los Angeles, almost three thousand miles from virtually all professional comic-book artists.

Nor will he accept the word of Marvel artists, such as Gene Colan, John Romita, John Buscema, Dan Adkins, Jim Steranko, Don Heck, Marie Severin, etc, etc. Nor, obviously, would he accept the belief of people like Steve Ditko, who has great admiration for Kirby--Neal Adams; who thinks Kirby's one of the top two or three men in the field--Gil Kane; who has said in an interview that Jack's facility "borders of genius"--or almost anybody in comic-books today. Poll any random samples of artists (and probably writers and editors as well, if they study comic-book art as business or hobby) and you'll find Kirby listed as one of the top two or three favorites. There are those who prefer the lightness of Wood or Crandall or Williamson, and I won't gainsay them. I myself have one or two artists I prefer. But, be that as it may, almost any artist will tell you that Jack is the number one influence in the business today...not Ditko, not Infantino, not Wood. It's a fact of life...one which DC, which drove Kirby away in the 50's and allowed Marvel to latch onto his tremendous talent in the first place, has finally realized and is trying belatedly to live with, as witness the Kirby-influenced work of people like Adams. (Or hasn't Mark noticed?) Good as Ditko was and is, it was Kirby that made Marvel artwise. True fact, if any is permitted to exist without Evanier's sanctions. Maybe Stan shouldn't have one-handedly proclaimed Kirby as "King"--but, it obviously never occured to him...and, obviously, to many other pros as well... that anyone would be so presumptuous as to challenge the title. Alas, we all reckoned without the gentleman from California.

In point of fact, I do not mean the foregoing to be merely some pontifical statement against Mark, but simply the setting forth of arguments and views which most people in the field would...at least in private conversation...voice to him if they could get him to listen long enough. Obviously, I am hoping that you'll print this letter almost in its entirety, as an article... really, the first I've done for a fanzine in a long time, since ALTER EGO has been so long delayed and is still a couple of months from being sent out. I've not bothered going into a defense of Stan, who doesn't need it from the likes of Evanier, though it might be well to mention that one reason Ray Bradbury likes Julie Schwartz (so do I) is that Julie sold his first story years ago. (But, Bradbury as possibly "the greatest writer in the world"? Careful, Mark...lest your literary criticism rob your artistic criticism of even the doubtful validity it might claim.

And, in closing, Mark will notice--if he bothers to check--that nothing of "The War Lover", to which I think Mark veiledly refers, was borrowed from the book but the title.

--Roy Thomas--Associate Editor
The Marvel Comics Group

IT'S CLOBBERIN' TIME

Dear Gang:

Overall I think issue #17 is your best effort so far. I really love the idea of the YSG going photo-offset. It really makes the difference. The fanzine is just easier to read this way and a lot more enjoyable.

However, I do have a few comments to make. First: was it really necessary to assign Mark Evanier a permanent spot in the zine? I realize that the YSG can not afford to have a strictly buttering up policy in regards to Marvel, but did you have to go as far as Mark Evanier? The pendulum swung too far this time. I for one hope his column is shortlived. He clutters up enough fanzines with his anti-Lee-anti-Marvel statements as it is. Now don't misunderstand me; I don't feel that Marvel or Lee is perfect. In fact, far from it. But then neither do I feel that Mark Evanier is the answer.

In Evanier's Epistle, he states that facts should be used to provide anything you say in a fanzine. I agree. But why doesn't he follow his own advice? That so called UCLA survey was more than just fairly inaccurate. Twenty-four newsstands in L.A. can not speak for the rest of the world's population that buys comics. And a stake out for just two weeks is no proof that any particular age group buys any particular magazine. Since I am a elementary school teacher I do come into contact with the reading habits of my students. The majority read DC all the way. Very few read Marvel. Now I realize that my "survey" is no more accurate Mr. Evanier's; but the difference is that I am not trying to say that because my third graders read DC that the average DC reader is in the third grade.

Now I shall proceed to make a few comments concerning the "X-Men Circus". Frankly, I think that the editors of YSG judge the mag too harshly. The change in costume is one of the greatest things to happen to the X-Men. Admittedly I liked the old uniforms, but these new ones are something else. A team does not always have to wear the same uniform. And each X-Man can be told apart from the others with no trouble at all. They are quite active and have been involved in many a great adventure, not to mention the present one concerning Magneto. Now with the professor dead the X-Men are going to have to depend on their own abilities and ingenuities even more than ever before. I foresee some really wonderful yarns in the future of the X-Men magzine.

You also make reference to the fact that one time the X-Men had to scrounge for money. You talk as if it were a disgrace. It was merely realistic. None but the very rich always have the money whenever they need it. The normal people who have monetary problems appreciate seeing their favorite heroes in the same boat. At one time both the FF and Dr. Strange were having monetary difficulties. Why not the X-Men? They are teen-agers and not only that but they didn't have any real dependable source of money either.

A puzzling factor was stated in your article. You claim the X-Men are considered to be the worst Marvel characters. Just because the YSG poll votes thumbs down on them does not mean the rest of Marvelites feel the same way. Cross section or no cross section can not speak for the world. Also according to Ron Liberman in his "Return of the Ghost Rider" X-Men is Marvel's #4. Whom are we to believe?

In conclusion I am going to make a few comments about fiction in the YSG. I am all for it provided that it is of sufficient length and quality. "Government Report # B-9305A" fit neither category. It was entirely too short. To top it off the story was about a trite overused subject. So much cheap SF has been written about nuclear bombs, nuclear mistakes etc. that another story about such happenings becomes just that: another story.

In spite of my latter comments, I do feel that issue #17 was a fine example of the effort that has been put into making the YSG the best fanzine around.
Shirley A. Gorman/230 N. 25 Mile Ave./ Hereford, Tex./79045

Dear Yancy Streeters:

I have only two serious suggestions:
1) When a Yancy Streeter writes a letter to a Marvel mag, he should "code" his address with a capital "Y" added to his street number.
2) Let's remember that we're amateurs, and Stan & Jack are the professionals. If all our suggestions were adopted, most Marvels would become <u>too</u> deep and complicated to attract new readers.

I'm looking forward to the next Yancy Street Gazette. I hope we last as long as Marvel itself, which should be forever.
Bill Cantey/809Y Stonefield Ave./ Charleston, S.C./29407

Dear Dan, Steve, and John:

This may be a bit late, but I received the Gazette later than I should have. However, I can not pass up a turn to comment on YSG #17. Just a glance at it tells how much work and time was put into such a creation, and I would rather receive an ish like this every two months rather than any like #14 every month. I was bitterly opposed to the change to half size, but right now the YSG <u>could not</u> be better. I now rate Dave Cochrum as your best artist; sure Al Grinage is still great, but there's something about Dave's thick inks, and natural , expressional characters that grabs me. Cochrum, Grinage, and Russell are a trio every zine should have. Seems like every time I comment on the YSG, I seem to judge it by its art. But let's face it; at first glance, <u>anyone</u> notices the art right off. Suffice it to say that you have absolutely no worries in the art department. As for the written portion, I'm glad to see that Mark Evanier is back shooting his mouth off; but I shouldn't say that, since he's a great writer, a dedicated member of comic fandom, so I hung on his every word waiting for him to blow his gasket, which he did not. I amglad he defined his gripes against Marvel Comics Group, and I'll be looking forward to more of Mr. Evanier, and a Mr. Mike Robertson, another great guy and formidable writer. If there's anyone who'll keep the YSG from falling apart, it will be Tony Isabella. He's come up with a few great ideas these past few issues. Dana Andersen may be imaginative, but I think fiction does not belong in the Gazette. I must have said enough about the art, but I can't help add that I think the full page illo of Fury by Cochrum was great!
Rick Rivers/23 Congress Ave./Medford, Massachusetts/02155

Dear YSG,

Congratulations on hitting 200! By the way, didja know that Dave Cochrum, new member and artist, is the guy who suggested the refinements in the costume of <u>Son of Vulcan</u> ? I think it was <u>S.V.</u> #48 or 49 and on the cover was written: "Special thanks to Dave Cochrum for costume ideas!" 'Nuff said.
Warren Bluhm/D-57 Brook Drive/Chester, New Jersey/07930

Dear Editors,

This letter is in response to the article in YSG #17 by Bob Renaud. Mr. Renaud asks us why there are war comics. First let me explain why there are wars.

Way back when America became a world power, we knew we would have to use our power, the power of Democracy to help the oppressed. This was done through economic aid. Then with Nazism and Communism, the threat was more than economic. Aggressors tried to take over neutral countries in order to convert them to their philosophy. Since we had pledged aid, and also since we didn't want to lose allies, we stepped in with a helping hand. However, the irony of it is that even after we drive back the aggressor, the rescued country usually consents to democracy, which we gladly impose upon them. It makes one wonder just who the real aggressors are.

As for talking it over, This is worthless, as evidenced by the Johnson-Kosygin Summit talks of '67. They believe in what they're doing, and we believe in what we are doing. There can be no compromise.

As for War Comics, they are cruel, not in their barbarism, but in their flaunting. We won WWII over the Germans and the Japs, and rather than presenting a true vision of how brave they were, Marvel's war titles mock them by making them seem to be a bunch of clowns. Sgt. Fury and Captain Savage are not true war stories. Rather they are about supermen who were immune to bullets, and could stop whole troops barehandedly. And this in itself is wrong. We should know war as it really is; rough, tough, and you never know when you are to die. Death could come at any time.

The reason their are no Viet-Nam comics out is obvious; we might lose, and if we did all of the Commander Tornado and his jumping junglemen comics ridiculing the Viet Cong might just infuriate them as well as make jerks out of us. Therefore we ridicule only soldiers who have won.

As for Peace comics, check he selling quotas of Millie the Model and war comics. Sorry, peace comics are not worth the time and effort to print them. We savages want fighting.

Martin Stern/18966 Evergreen/Detroit, Mich. 48219

Dear Yancy Streeters,

We have a very limited number of back issues of #17 left which can be purchased with a quarter from the the headquarters. As you have noticed we only had 20 pages this month as opposed to the 24 we had last month. This page decrease was due mostly to the switch-over to the new printer, which is a little more expensive than it was in Warren. We would encourage you to pay your dues (25¢ per issue) so we can use these close-by facilities. From now on there will be no Yancy Awards. The reason being that we have not been getting enough votes to publish a fair election. So don't send any more votes. We will, however, be sending out more poll sheets on future occurances in fandom. We would like to thank Roy (the Rascally One himself) Thomas for his fine article against Evanier in defense of Kirby. --The Eds.

Yancy Street Gazette

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